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HIGH-LIGHTS OF ARMENIAN MEDIAEVAL ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE

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The Armenian Church's devotional writers, by way of eminence, are of the Middle Ages, or what is known as the Silver Age of Armenian Literature, namely, Gregory of Nareg, and the Catholicos, Nerses the Graceful.

GREGORY OF NAREG

Gregory was a monk of the Convent of Nareg, on the south shores of Lake Van, and is the author of the Armenian Prayer Book, entitled by the author a *Book of Lamentations*, and popularly known as *Nareg*. The book was written at the beginning of the eleventh century (1002), during a period of history when the successes of the Emperor Basil II against the Saracens promised to restore in the country an evanescent Byzantine ascendancy. A prayer-book, it consists mainly of meditations, with petitions of penitence and aspiration.

The book occupies in Armenian church literature a place somewhat akin to that of *The Imitation of Christ*, attributed to à Kempis, in Western Europe. But being more distinctly doctrinal and penitential than the fifteenth century Dutch book, it also has points of resemblance to Augustine's *Confessions*. To compare the three together, Augustine is primarily autobiographical, and à Kempis hortatory; Gregory is devotional. Augustine's famous book is one of confessions and prayers, the *Imitation* of counsels and prayers, and the *Book of Nareg* of studies and prayers. While emphasizing renunciation, the *Confessions* at the same time throb with life; like the *Imitation*, the *Book of Nareg* breathes the air of the monastery, stressing renunciation as an end in itself rather than as a preparation for adventuring for God. It is written primarily for monks:

Behold I say unto you, ye congregations of ascetics, and ye candidates in monasteries, who with your bare hands have enlisted in the Lord's army with hope and expectation of gifts of infinite good, before whom I have spread this table of the dainties of the Word, receive ye this word of confession to the edifying and saving of your souls.¹

1 All translations, in prose or verse, in the present article are my own.

The devotional style of the book will appear as we proceed to examine the doctrinal content constituting for us its main interest.

The theology of *Nareg* is Augustinian. Like Augustine and Paul, Gregory would shut us all up under sin:

Know ye by this the unprofitableness of the flesh; remember the prophetic and apostolic word given for our admonition, Let no flesh glory before God, and There is none righteous, no, not one.

If you would escape judgment, seek deliverance from sin:

Dash out the lees of the insensate unrighteousness of my cup of death, by Thy saving command, Thou Savior of all, that I may not drain on that last Day the cup of Thy wrath.

Gregory's hope is in the mercy of God:

Reward me not according to my evil deeds.

I have no courage to extend toward Thee my sinful hands of flesh, until Thou extend to me Thine own blessed right hand to the renewing of me condemned.

Neither does he hope in vain:

But if the Father, pitiful, heavenly, mighty, gave up for the sins of me who lay under a condemnation One who was of His own very Being, Only-Begotten of His inscrutable bosom, not sparing Thee, the Son, co-equal with himself in honor, and well-beloved, yea, willingly gave unto the death prepared by them who tormented Thee with instruments of death, according to the prophecy of Zecharias who speaks of the sword arising upon the Shepherd and smiting the Leader of the Flock, the sheep of the flock being scattered abroad (antitype of an earlier noble original, to be found in the Covenant of the Altar, with the presenting of the blood of the victim, and in the parable of the mystery of the Abrahamic sacrifice pre-figuring the salvation of me, the miserable one, by the will of the Giver of Life), why, O my soul, be now sad, ruined as thou art, not by design of God, but solely by thine own inclination, and why disturb me with despair, smiting my spirit with demonic thoughts? Hope thou in God, confess to Him, and He will care for thee, even according to the Davidic Psalm, and to the heartening word of that other prophet.

All the springs of Gregory's comfort are in God:

For Thine is the salvation, and from Thee is cleansing, and from Thy right hand is the renewing, and by Thy finger is power, and from Thy commands is righteousness, and from Thy mercies freedom, and from Thy Face is light, and from Thy presence is pleasure, and by Thy spirit is goodness, and by the anointing of Thine oil is healing, and by the sprinkling of

Thy grace is joy, and Thou art the One who bestowest comfort, and causest to forget despair, and liftest off the darkness of sorrows, and turnest the crying of lamentation into rejoicing.

Gregory's God is an able God:

If Thou wilt Thou canst; nay rather Thou wilt just as Thou canst.

God wills it and man is saved:

Do Thou will it, Lord, and I shall be saved; regard me but in pity, and I shall be justified; speak the word, and forthwith I shall be spotless; forget the number of my sins, and instantly I shall receive courage; deal generously with me, and behold I shall be grafted on Thee, Thou Ever All-Blessed One.

That God Himself may not offhand will man's salvation, but must needs do something before He can save, enters not Gregory's thought. He has no doctrine of a divine atonement. He sees the tragedy of the cross, sees Christ as the divine martyr, and there he stops:

They carried Thee out as a whole burnt offering, they hung Thee up as the Ram in the Thicket caught by the horns, they spread Thee on the Altar of the cross as a sacrifice, they nailed Thee to it as a malefactor, bound Thee as a rebel, Thee the Peace of Heaven as a thief, Thee of greatness irreducible as a victim, Thee whom the Cherubim worship as one despised, Thee the beginning and the end of Life, as one worthy of a felon's death, Thee the Author of the Gospel as a blasphemer of the Law, Thee the Lord and Fulfiller of the prophets as an abbreviator of the scriptures, Thee the Ray of Glory and Seal of the Father's inscrutable secret as an enemy of the Father's Will, Thee in very truth Blessed as one banished from God, Thee the looser of the bonds of the Law as a man under a curse, Thee the consuming fire as a prisoner condemned, Thee who art terrible to heaven and earth as a very convict, Thee who art clothed with light unapproachable as one of the earthborn.

However, our writer may be termed a Calvinist before Calvin:

If we flee from Thee, Thou pursuest us; if we weaken, Thou dost make us strong; if we err, Thou shovest an easy path; if we fear, Thou heartenest; if we become diseased in soul or body, Thou dost heal; if we become foul in sin, Thou dost cleanse; if we lie, Thou correctest by Thy truth; if we sink into the lowest abyss, Thou directest us heavenward; if we turn not of our own will, Thou turnest us; if we transgress, Thou mournest; if we are justified, Thou smilest; if we become alienated from Thee, Thou dost grieve; if we return, Thou dost rejoice; if we give, Thou dost accept; if we delay, Thou art patient; if we are ungrateful, Thou bestowest bountifully; if we are undone, Thou mournest; if we do valiantly, Thou gloriest.

Was ever the blending of the divine sovereignty and human freedom more simply told?

God then is waiting to be gracious, and for man to be overly penitent, equally with persistence in sin, defeats the divine purpose of salvation:

Repentance to excess and sin to impenitence alike betray unto perdition. For while these twain are things different in character, alike but different, yet if we will but compare them carefully, we shall find that they both produce the same progeny of despair. For the first is unbelief toward the Hand of the Mighty One as though it were weakened, while the second, insensate like unto four-footed beasts, breaks off the very halter of hope.

Everything that the Christian has received is mediated to him through Christ:

I have no King but Thee to rule over my spirit, O Christ, who causest me to bear unconstrained Thy sweet yoke, who removest the disease of sin by Thine all powerful word, who didst purchase me with Thy blood, feed me with Thy flesh, establish for me a Covenant of Life immovable, who, sealing me by Thy Spirit as a co-partner with Thyself didst present me to Thy Father a joint-heir with Thyself, and embolden me to entreat my Benefactor by that Sacrifice offered up in perpetual commemoration of Thy Passion, Thou Creator of All, and Life!

The sinner's only hope is Christ:

If I cry unto Abraham himself, he cannot, as is quite evident from that pitiful parable of Dives athirst in the flame, send to me, shut up as he is under the laws of common impossibility, even so much as a drop of water; and if I cry unto Moses, he also is touched with infirmity, for neither was he able to save the one man from death taken gathering on the Sabbath his supply of sticks; and if I cry unto Aaron, he was himself in need of an intercessor; or to David, he too, for all his abundant virtues, sinned; or to Noah, and Job, and Daniel, these, together with David, the prophet Ezekiel mentions by name in speaking in the name of God, saying, As I live, saith the Lord, they shall not save their own sons and daughters from the wrath to come, but they themselves alone shall be saved; or to Peter, the Rock of the Faith, he, too, O my soul, under stress of such fears as thine, was caught like unto thee in sin.

Man cannot save, Christ must:

And because the saving power of men is thus in doubt, and they one and all have been shown to be but recipients of mercy from Thee the merciful, enabled by Thy might, called by Thy saving grace, cleansed by Thy power, favored by Thy salvation, healed by Thy health, sanctified by Thy

holiness, and enlightened by Thy renewing, knowing henceforth the measure of my earthborn nature, I also will but take them all as examples of comfort to those like them despairing of self-trust, and will resort to Thee alone, Thou Son of the Living God, all-blessed Christ.

Thus does Gregory delight to magnify Christ. This Christ is the only proper object of faith, which is very simply conceived:

If thou believest in Him, thou also lovest, wherefore also thou hopest for his gifts as yet unseen.

To Gregory's mind Christian salvation grows out of personal relationships of sinner to Savior. Wherefore he writes:

I long not for the gifts, but rather for the Giver; not the glory would I seek, but the Glorified One embrace; not for life, but at thought of the Life-Giver Himself, do I with yearning pine; not with a craving for enjoyments do I mourn, but with a longing for Him who hath prepared them for me do I cry in the inward parts; I entreat not for the rest reserved, but agonize to behold the Face of Him who bestows that rest; not for the feast of the nuptial chamber do I hunger, but do hunger with longing for the Bridegroom Himself.

What place then, if any, have the saints of the Church? In Gregory's scheme one humble enough:

For in this *Book of Lamentations*, I would by no means depreciate the Saved, without whom it were not meet to approach the Lord; but I fain would crown the Savior's Name, and tell abroad to the world His Grace.

In one or two places in the book the intercession of saints is casually mentioned, if indeed it is not inserted by a later hand. There is a Prayer to the Virgin Mother, and another addressed to Guardian Angels. That is all. One scarcely wonders that the author actually at one time fell under suspicion as a Paulician.

And what of the Church? Gregory's doctrine of the Church and the Holy Virgin is exceedingly like the Paulician. The Church is the true Virgin Mother. He would do no wrong who should

take the picture of the Mother of God as a representation of (the Church), the great and beatific spotless Queen, archetype of all virgins, my glorious Mother ever to be praised!

Not entirely lacking in ritualism, our writer is not a ritualist. Always in subordination to the spiritual, the physical is necessary. Baptism is required, and so is unction:

The font is not made perfect without the accessory of the chrism.

There is a panegyric on the muron in which the physical and the spiritual anointing are not sharply differentiated. Yet the spiritual is unmistakably stressed. The Spirit's baptism is something superior to ritual baptism:

More to be desired than water, He, too, baptizes, renewing and illuminating by his own sole sufficient power, and ever is efficient in that good work.

NERSES THE GRACEFUL

Nerses was Catholicos, or General Bishop of All the Armenians, toward the end of the twelfth century (1166-73).

He has a *Prayer*, consisting of a petition for every hour of the day and night, which, since 1690, has been translated into thirty-five different foreign languages. He also has a devotional poem which he styles *A Lamentation in Romance*, but which is better known by its first line, "Jesus, the Father's Only Son." This is a summary in 4,000 lines of the History of Redemption, and is said to be, next to *Nareg*, the Armenians' most popular devotional book. It consists of three parts, the first covering the period of the Old Testament, the second the ministry of our Lord, and the third the crucifixion to the last judgment, with a view of the later martyrs of the faith. Each incident described is given a personal application for the reader. The poem was written in 1151. One passage may here be given to convey an idea of the whole.

From Salem, our Paradise,
 With Adam the sinner,
 I descended to the lower Jericho,
 To fall into the hands of thieves,
 Who both stripped me of the Light
 And filled my soul with the wounds of sin,
 And departed, leaving me not half
 But quite dead from the encounter.
 Whom the Levite Moses,
 And Aaron, that priest of old,
 The House also of the Great Patriarch.
 And the prophets of the Old Law
 Beheld, with wounds of exceeding pain
 And gashes wide-gaping, and,
 Passed by, with medicines of mere words.
 Incompetent to heal.

Unto Thee, the Samaritan,
 So called by the contemptuous Hebrews,
 Would I display my griefs,
 Yea, unto Thy divine seeing eyes.
 Have Thou pity on me as on Adam,
 Put healing medicine in my spirit's deep wound,
 Clothe me in my pristine garments
 Of which thieves have stripped me naked,
 Pour on oil and wine,
 That medicine of life from the Spirit supernal,
 Restoring again the Anointing of the Spirit
 And the Cup of the New Covenant.
 Bear me away upon the Cross,
 Bring me to the Inn, the Church,
 Give me in charge of the Head Priest
 Offering Thee up as a fleshly sacrifice,
 And with the two pence grant
 The Word also of the Old and the New Testament,
 To care therewith for my soul
 Even as the body is fed with bread.

The Keble of the Armenian Church, Nerses is best known by his hymns. These are numerous. The hymns of the Armenian *Horologion* are all from his pen. The hymns of Nerses are marked by pregnancy of thought, beauty of diction, lucidity, precision and polish, marred only by a uniformity of rhyme, a frequent attention to form, and artificiality. Many of the hymns are acrostics, a device resorted to as a help to the memory in congregational singing. In the ensuing translations meter and sense are carefully preserved.

The best known of the hymns is the one addressed to the Trinity, a few stanzas of which must here suffice:

Thou morn of my light, Sun of Righteousness,
 shine into my soul;
 Thou from God flowing, let flow from my soul
 words to Thee pleasing.

Unity Triune, Preserver of All, have mercy on me;
 Arise, Lord, and help; rouse me slumbering, with
 angels to wake.

Thy name, Christ, is Love; soften with Thy love
 this my heart of stone;
 By Thine own pity, by Thine own mercy,
 make me live again.

Savior Thou of all, hasten me to save
 from the snares of sin;

Cleanser of sin's stain, cleanse me now who sing
yonder Thee to praise.

Well-known also among the hymns of Nerses is his *Easter Song*:

God the Word from naught created
In the beginning the heaven of heavens,
And heavenly hosts incorporeal
Of angelic beings rational;
The four elements also of sense,
Each the other repelling and attracting—
By which forever is glorified
The ineffable Holy Trinity.

Thrice holy, Thou, and sovereign Lord,
God in one nature eternal,
Light uncreated and creating,
By Thee did come created light,
That shined the first day of the seven,
E'en the Lord's Day, upon the world—
By which forever is glorified
The ineffable Holy Trinity.

Explain we then the allegory,
Announce the hidden mystery:
The Light Unseen and Rational,
To pure souls only visible,
Shined forth on that first day of seven
The Resurrection's holy ray.
Come with the angels, ye redeemed,
Give blessing to the Risen One.

Thou Who art Love, in love didst bend
To take our flesh our souls to save;
In that same flesh wast crucified
And placed thus lifeless in the tomb;
This day divinely didst arise
And wast of angels bright proclaimed.
Come with the angels, ye redeemed,
Give blessing to the Risen One.

Thou to the women didst appear
And greet them joyously to life,
And on the Mount in Galilee
To Thine Holy Apostles Eleven.
With them may all we worthy be
On that last Day, Thee Lord, to see.
Come with the angels, ye redeemed,
Give blessing to the Risen One.

Ye sons of Zion, haste and rise,
 Tidings of light the Bride to bring,
 Saying to her, Thy Bridegroom risen
 Hath conquered death by power divine,
 And comes with glory thee to crown;
 Meet Him thou in thine adornments.
 Sing a new song to Him who rose,
 First-fruits of life to them that sleep.

Surnamed in his youth, at the Conventual School of the Red Convent of Kesun, by way of an academic title, "the Graceful," Nerses came to be known in the world at large by the same title for his Christian gifts and graces. His life falls within the period of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1080-1375). He was a contemporary of Bernard of Clairvaux, and in a variety of ways a kindred spirit to the celebrated Frenchman. More than a hundred years after his death, subsequent to the fall of Rom-gla² to the Sultan of Egypt (1292), his remains were reinterred in that fortress in a church erected specially to receive them. His tomb, down to our own day, was a place of pilgrimage for all races, it being said that even Moslems of those parts swore by the name of the Armenian saint.

GREGORY OF DATEV

So early as 1321, that portion of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* relating to the seven sacraments was translated by Uniate *Unitors* into Armenian. Isidore of Seville's *Book of Vices and Virtues* appears also to have been rendered into Armenian under the supervision of the then youthful Sicilian Franciscan monk, Peter of Aragona,³ in 1339, and employed as a textbook for study. This *Unitor* propaganda, at its height in the late fourteenth century, called forth a vigorous reply from Gregory of Datev, the great Armenian scholastic of the time. Gregory was a man of extensive learning, and a prolific writer, having to his credit three books on Aristotle, one on Porphyry, sev-

2 The Turks call it Rum Kaleh. It lies at the great west bend of the Euphrates, not far from Aintab. Kesun is not far away to the north.

3 The identifications are my own surmise, I think safe. Zarbhanelian, in his *History of Armenian Literature*, seems to think the book Peter's own original composition, and says it was well received by nationals as well as Catholics. But by the Italian Encyclopaedia Peter of Aragona at the date indicated was a young man in his early twenties. Nor, I think, would his book have been so generally acceptable to orthodox Armenians had it been other than a translation of an ancient and accepted authority.

eral commentaries on the Bible, two volumes of sermons, and some minor works, but is best known as the author of a *Book of Questions*, the Armenian *Summa*, completed in 1397, during the second Tatar invasions of Armenia.

Gregory was born about 1346, in a district to the east of Dvin, in Siunik province. A pupil of John of Vorodn, he received his doctorate in 1387, succeeding his distinguished teacher in Abragunik monastery the year following. In 1390 we find him in the chair of theology in the monastery of Datev, residence of the Bishop of Siunik who at that time was his own nephew. He was at Datev until 1408, when he fled to his paternal province of Vaspuragan (Van), the Tatar depredations subsequent to Tamerlane's death rendering further residence at Datev unsafe, and entered with his pupils the monastery of Medzob. In 1410, following an abortive agitation on his part to transfer the Catholicate from Sis in Cilicia to its original seat of Etchmiadzin, which actually was done thirty-one years afterward, he returned to Datev, and died there in the same year. His tomb is still shown.

The *Book of Questions* is an outline of theology, in style much like a collection of sermon outlines, bristling with "points," and appears originally intended as a handbook of outline studies for class discussion. The author shows in it broad erudition, being acquainted with Philo, the early Fathers, both Eastern and Western, including Augustine, and later writers such as Isidore of Seville, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas. He is particularly partial to the Pseudo-Dionysius, to whom he devotes his Third Book, and whom he cites full two dozen times elsewhere. The work consists of forty chapters divided into ten books as follows: Bk. i (chaps. 1-3), Against non-Christian doctrines; Bk. ii (chaps. 4-7), Against heresies; Bk. iii (chaps. 8, 9), On the teaching of Dionysius on God, angels and demons; Bk. iv (chaps. 10-14), On the physical creation; Bk. v (chaps. 15-17), On the constitution of man; Bk. vi (chaps. 18-23), On the Mosaic Pentateuch; Bk. vii (chaps. 24-29), On Joshua, Judges and Kings; Bk. viii (chap. 30), On the Incarnation; Bk. ix (chaps. 31-35), On the Church, its sacraments and worship; Bk. x (chaps. 36-40), Eschatology. The author's expressed aim is to include "not all that is familiar to all, but much that is useful and sought by many."

The method is hyper-analytical, the style usually dry, the content occasionally verges on the puerile. Necessarily the science is mediaeval. Nor is it Gregory's own fault that his book, written in a pre-Copernican age, was printed by other hands (1730) two hundred years after Copernicus had announced the heliocentric nature of the solar system (1530), and a hundred years after Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood (1628). Gregory still knows the elements as four, namely, earth and water, air and fire.

For without earth there were no touch; nor without water apprehension or cohesion; nor without air motion, nor without fire sight.

An apple

consists of the four elements, having its growth of the earth, whence first springs the underlying body; and then the taste, which is of water, and the fragrance which is of the air, and last of all the color which is of fire.

Bk. vi, on the Mosaic Pentateuch, is largely typological. Occasionally, too, Gregory, like Mrs. Eddy, will let his exegesis turn on the phonetics of his own language. However, his usual good hard sense will not let him know too much beyond that which is revealed. In answer to the question, What was the forbidden fruit? he says:

How dare man discuss what the Holy Book has not revealed? Here surely lies the truth of the matter: The one tree was the Tree of Life, and the other that of Knowledge, and there was no other like either in Paradise, let alone on the earth! We dare not therefore say it was either this or that.

But here is a venture in explication worthy of a Keim. To the question, Whence did the possessions of Job multiply? he answers:

All the friends that came together afterward and comforted him brought each a lamb and four pieces of unminted gold and presented them to him by way of an uninspiring gift, and from these the Lord multiplied his goods and chattels, even as in the desert he multiplied the few loaves and fed the multitudes.

Here, too, is a promise made in the Preface that will command the approval of every biblical student:

Now the foundation of this work shall rest upon the immovable Rock Christ. And the whole structure shall be fortified by four pillars, the first erected by the apostolical preaching, the second by the prophetic witness, the third by the truth as elucidated by commentators, and the fourth by my readers' truth-loving assent.

The First Book refutes, together with the doctrines of Manichaeans and Jews, the opinions of those affirming luck and necessity, and holding moral evil and good to be alike from God. The divine foreknowledge does not mean fate. God indeed foreknows the evil or good men do, but by no means is personally responsible for it.

As man's cognizance is after the event, while God's is before the event from eternity, and as man's cognizance varies according to the event, while God's remains invariable, so likewise is it with the divine foreordination and election; but he imposes no necessity upon anyone.

Psychology: Gregory is neither a strict traducianist, nor yet a strict creationist, but holds that man being one, his soul and body at birth come simultaneously into being by the eternal will and providence of God whose image he is. In this view he is a follower of Gregory of Nyssa.

The same rational spirit is neither a new creation nor an old one. It is not an old one, seeing that according to each body is the soul at the same time created; nor is it a new one, for the self-same creative command given from the beginning by the Creator operates without weakening until the end; neither is a new command given at each soul's creation. And that being so, though in actual being the soul is new, as commanded of God it is not new.

Sin: Gregory's teachings on the origin of evil are borrowed direct from the Pseudo-Dionysius, who himself borrows from others.

Evil is not an entity but a deficiency.

The good is a natural property of us, for we have our being in the good; but the evil comes in afterward, and is the absence of the good.

Evil is not of God, and is not of nature, or in nature, and is not nature.

The good is being. Hence it is evident that they (good and evil) are contrary the one to the other, for all that is of the good is, and all that truly is good, whilst evil is not-being. But now God is the cause of being, and not of not-being. Wherefore evil is not of God.

Would not that have delighted Mrs. Eddy? Nonetheless, Gregory thinks the deficiency, which is evil, is one of the human will.

The will of God is not impotent, for He does whatsoever He wills; but He willed and made us self-directing and masters of our own acts, whether evil or good.

But why (asks Gregory), seeing that God foreknew, did He create those that should be such as they (*scil.*, the evil angels)? (He replies): For an ornamental effect to his works. For just as the painter puts the

dark colors in the background in order to show up to better advantage the white and similar fine effects, so likewise by the display of the evil, God intended the righteous to shine in brighter colors.

Original Sin: Here is some Augustinian teaching:

Now though the soul is not derived from the father as the body is, yet does original sin pass on from the soul of Adam to the souls of his descendants by reason of the body being generated in concupiscence.

And if one ask, Why are we responsible for Adam's debt? we reply: Sin is double, being of nature and of person (original and actual). Therefore our nature is corrupted by sin in Adam, and even as he was punished, so likewise are we punished. The son, however, does not personally pay for the father's personal sins, else evil parents never could have good children.

(Original sin) is not remitted until one is baptized into the death of Christ.

Actual Sin and Confession:

Sin is a turning away from the constant good that is in God to the inconstant good of us creatures. Again, sin is word, or deed, or desire contrary to the Law of God, for which man falls under the wrath of God.

Repentance is essential to forgiveness,

and it is necessary that repentance should be at the feet of the priest.

The priest shall inquire about everything necessary to get at the facts, but not so as by the inquiry to teach the confessant further sin.

Then shall penance be imposed, of whatever sort called for, whether fasts, prayers, alms, mass, or whatever else be within the priest's power to impose, for it were necessary to heal like with like.

Faith and Salvation:

God justifies when the sinner fits himself for grace by doing that which is good.

This is not to be understood as meaning that the sinner by his good works earns the Divine Grace, but rather that thereby he fits himself for the reception of God's Free Grace.

For in order to His work of justice, God demands somewhat also on the part of man, demands, that is, what is due. But in the doing of His work of mercy, He exacts nothing at all but what flows from His own will as revealed in the Incarnation of the Word of God through the Holy Virgin Mary.

Not by works, but by that faith that is in Christ, have we received back the original righteousness, the good works of the body, and the holiness of the mind.

When all law became of none effect, being impotent to save, then

came and was revealed to us the Lawgiver Himself, who saved us even so that we should understand our righteousness and our salvation as flowing not from the Law, but from the Grace of Christ.

This thing called Faith becomes great through hope, and is made perfect by love. Paul calls it a shield. For if thou art showered with troubles from the heights, thou shalt take thy stand beneath thy faith and live. And if from within the leaven of corruption threaten, then thou shalt lean upon thy faith and shalt not succumb. And if sense shall oppress thee from above, then thou shalt oppose to it thy faith and shalt not stumble. And if from the rear the fiery darts of Satan assail, thou shalt defend thyself therewith and abide in safety. And if from the right flabby success soften, believe thou in the joys that are above, and thou shalt not be seduced. And if from the left failures overwhelm thee with sadness, thou shalt find solace in faith and shalt not sink in despair.

The Protestant Reformation truly was not so much a new discovery of truth, as a new application of it only!

Christology: Modern biology hardly will sustain Gregory's doctrine of the Virgin Mother:

A woman that brings forth a child is called a mother of man, though the soul is not from the mother, but by virtue of the body thereto united she is called a mother of man. So is it with the Holy Virgin, Mother of God, by virtue of the body become divine.

Nor will modern theology approve his explanation of the sinlessness of Christ.

But our Savior Christ alone was free from original sin, the reason for this being that he assumed a body not from seed of man but from the pure blood of the Virgin.

Gregory is an uncompromising Monophysite. But we must be careful to understand what is meant by that name. The orthodoxy of that theology is thus shown in broad outline:

Arius would have made out the uncreated Word God a creature in need of the divine anointing, whilst Nestorius would have set His body off by itself and pronounced it mere man. All those who thus think and teach the Church of all true believers anathematizes. Amen.

The Monophysite view is that the incarnation was not a metamorphosis of deity into humanity, nor yet of humanity into deity, but was an act of the deity assuming human flesh while yet continuing in the character of deity.

Some speak of Christ as being (severally) by nature and by grace a Son, as do the accursed Nestorians, and the Chalcedonians, whence there must needs be two sons and two personalities. But we thus confess Christ: By nature Son of God, and the same by nature Son of Man. For in His

own nature He united with human flesh, and being in His own nature God, He became man, thus becoming God-in-the-flesh, by nature, and not by transformation or by grace.

Christ is not a mere man, neither is He solely God, but God become man.

Necessarily this involves the unitary nature. The writer endorses the view of Gregory Nazianzen in holding that God became man, and man became God, in Him, the two natures uniting thus in one person.

This union we confess as one person, one individual, one character, one nature, one will, and one operation.

Why do we not say 'two natures' in Christ? To the end that Christ may not be sundered apart into two several personalities; for if we distinguish 'two natures,' of necessity we distinguish also two persons.

Gregory will not say "one person and two natures,"

for the reason that that which is united is not to be again divided, for to say or to understand two natures is a dividing and a sundering of Christ.

But we confess the Word God, not in part but entirely incarnated and become man, even as says Paul, In Him dwells all the completeness of His Godhead bodily. Not by any mutation or confusion, but by an unconfused union, the Word becoming flesh and uniting our nature perfectly with his Deity, and appearing in the body in one single visible nature and personality, one Lord, one Son, in conformity with the holy Fathers' true teaching. Whence also we confess our Lord Jesus Christ to be one, and His nature one, for 'one is the nature of the Word made flesh' (Cyril of Alexandria and Athanasius).

The unitary nature or personality implies necessarily a unity of will and operation.

Just as in the union of spirit and body there proceeds through one will one energy of thought and action (in man), so does there appear in all the earthly life of the Incarnate Word, operating through one energy and power, a united will and a corresponding unity of action. Witness the Scripture, *Whatsoever the Father doeth, these same the Son also doeth.*

From this it follows that the passion of Christ is the passion of God.

All passions of the body are ascribed to the man to whom the body belongs. As when the body of Peter is wounded or tortured, we say that Peter is wounded, and Peter is tortured. By the same analogy the body of Christ is God, wherefore The Divine (*sc.* Gregory Nazianzen) says, God was crucified, God suffered.

Viewed in that light, Theopaschitism does not seem so irrational as so often it has been represented as being.

Soteriology: Salvation begins and ends with Christ, man's sole Savior.

He is the whole-burnt-offering, and the redemption, and the thank-offering for sins and trespasses, and the fulfilling of all offerings and the head thereof is He.

He is the divine Redeemer incarnate.

We confess the passion and the death of God become man, by which we have been redeemed.

Even as the Serpent was lifted up upon the rod, so was also our Lord upon the Cross. And as he who looked upon the Serpent was healed, so also he who believes on the Crucified One is healed of the poison of the death-dealing Serpent.

In explaining the vicarious sacrifice, Gregory says that if Christ became sin for us, he thereby did not become sinful.

God the Father, seeing that His will was not done in us, according to the multitude of His mercies sent His Only Begotten Son to hang in our stead upon the wood, and so deliver us from the curse of the Law, even as says the Apostle, He redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that remains hanging upon the wood. This curse, however, did not touch him personally, and that for three reasons, viz.: (1) First, He became a curse to bear our curse, only as He became sin to bear our sins; (2) Secondly, He came under a curse for us, but Himself was free from it, no innocent man being properly subject to a curse; (3) Thirdly, for that He himself was the blessing, the curse could by no means come near to Him but only to be changed thereby into a blessing, even as darkness is turned to light, and sin to holiness, and death to life by Him; wherefore, plainly, He changed the wood of the curse, and the grave itself, into a very fountain of blessing for us. Others also thus explain: All that is cursed must remain hanging upon the wood, but not all hanging upon the wood is cursed; wherefore as the ram in the thicket is not accursed, and the brazen Serpent is not accursed, so neither was our Lord accursed.

In the following language the voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice, and the federal headship, are stressed:

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But neither in his own person, nor by the Father Himself, was He forsaken, dreading His own sufferings; for He came voluntarily, and not under constraint. Rather in His own person He represents us who indeed are forsaken and unregarded of God because of our own trespasses, He being of the same nature with ourselves, and the Head of us his members.

This voluntariness is climaxed and attested by His resurrection.

Our Lord said, I have power to lay down myself, and I have power to take it up again. For though the Jews crucified Him, yet it was by His own will that He died. Which explains why He cried out aloud in giving up the ghost; for in the hour of death the voices of men are faint. And though Joseph took Him down from the Cross, and Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Him up in gravecloths, yet it was by His own will alone that He descended into Joseph's arms, and was anointed with myrrh. In like manner also He rose again by His own will.

The Holy Spirit: The First Ecumenical Council, says Gregory, taught the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, and the first three Ecumenical Councils placed under an anathema all those otherwise teaching. The Fourth Council, that of Chalcedon, likewise confirms the single procession.

And we in conformity to the holy orthodox doctrine therefore believe and confess God the Holy Spirit as proceeding from God the Father ("the Spirit that proceedeth from the Father"), and as "taking" ("He shall take of mine") from God the Son. For proceeding is one thing, and taking is quite another.

Gregory gives to his doctrine in the following terms a psychological explanation:

The Holy Spirit is from the Father as the volition is from the mind, while the Son is as the cognition (of the same mind). But as the volition is not from the cognition, so neither is the Spirit from the Son.

Papal Supremacy: Dionysius is cited as teaching in the Sixth Chapter of his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* that Peter is the head of the Apostles.

Yes (replies Gregory), but having read 'the Head,' why overlook the words (that follow), 'of the same order'? For it says, 'Head, and of the same order with them.'

Peter is Head of the Apostles, not as is the Bishop of the priests, or the Catholicos of the Bishops, but as one of a number of co-ordinate priests is father to the rest.

But if one should say, It hence appears that it is not our duty to obey the Apostle Peter or his See, our reply is, You say a hard thing, for we do obey the Apostle Peter as we do Christ, and Paul, and all the Apostles, too, with their disciples, and their successors, and their sees. And we also obey the other four (*sc.*, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople), as co-regnant with Christ.

There are seven sacraments, viz.: baptism, confirmation, communion, confession, extreme unction, ordination, and matrimony.

Baptism: To the question, What is the punishment reserved for an unbaptized child? Gregory answers:

Darkness only, both here and in the hereafter. For the torments of fire are the penalty of actual, not of original sin.

It is legitimate to baptize children of infidels, in order that if they die they may be saved from original sin and the punishment of hell. But it were not legitimate to accept an infidel for God-father, for the reason that he has not the holy faith, neither has renounced Satan, wherefore also is incompetent to speak for the child or act as its sponsor, one alien to the faith being incompetent to mediate it to others.

Communion: Referring to Exodus 24:6, 8, Gregory asks:

What means it that half of the blood of the sacrifice he mixed with water and sprinkled on the congregation, and half he poured around about the altar? (And answers,) It typifies the congregation cleansed by the Font and united in the Communion of the blood of Christ.

For the unmixed chalice he finds the justification in the Mosaic ritual:

And should one say that it is necessary to mix water in the eucharistic wine even as did Moses, we reply, It is not necessary, (1) First, because plainly Moses poured one-half of the blood around the altar unmixed, which signified the mystery of the unmixed blood, and one-half he mixed in water as has been indicated, in token of baptism and communion combined; (2) secondly, because the water was the first in the basin, and he poured the blood into it, which is a type of baptism, whereas these men pour out first the blood, and afterward the water; (3) thirdly, because he sprinkled first the water mixed with blood upon the congregation, which was an act of baptism, whereas these do taste the water with the blood! Plainly therefore their rite diverges from its type; and it is further evident from the foregoing that it behooves us to give the communion after baptism, and, as has already been shown, neither do they do that.

Why then do some mix water with the sacramental wine, and leaven with the bread?

Here is the true reason: Those holding the body of Christ corruptible, though they variously argue, are the very ones that mix leaven and water. But we the orders of true believers do confess the Virgin-born Body of Christ incorruptible, wherefore also we celebrate the mystery of His body and blood with unleavened bread and the unmixed cup.

Marriage and Divorce:

As to the exception, 'except the cause of adultery,' that indicates that for whatever cause, whether adultery or some other, they be separated, both being agreed to the separation, they must remain in that state until they shall be reconciled to each other, and if only one of them, whether

the man or the woman, be the cause thereof, that one shall remain unmarried, while the other, being innocent, may remarry.

Future Punishment: Gregory believes in a physical hell fire for incorporeal spirits. As there is only one heaven, so there is only one hell.

Middle hell, which is termed the prison of hell, is for middling sinners who have faith and no works, like bad believers, or have works and no faith, like those short in faith or entirely destitute of it.

Purgatory: In this article of doctrine of the Latin Church our writer finds

an analogy to Plato's doctrine on metempsychosis representing rational man as passing on to the sensuous state, thence to the vegetative, and from the last to heaven. So those holding this doctrine speak of men as entering fire, and being therefrom raised to heaven.

In proof that there is no purgatory Gregory cites 2 Peter 2:9. The Armenian *Gayan* is but a temporary *abode* for souls good and bad until the Last Judgment, by some called *limbo* and *paradise*.

The Millennium:

The Thousand Years are a perfect number, embracing ten centuries. These Thousand Years are reckoned from the First Advent of Christ to the Second, and signify the many and the more than the many. They are a symbol of the saints' perfect and more than perfect rest, now in hope, subsequent to death with Christ in the kingdom of the spirit, and following the resurrection, both in spirit and in body, not for a (literal) thousand years, but in the life everlasting, even as the Apostle says, If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

To the foregoing review of Gregory's theology, one more word may be added. Anti-Latin in purpose and content, the book is not entirely untinged with Latinism. Ormanian, the late Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, who served an apprenticeship in the Roman Church, thus explains the cause and degree:⁴

The necessity for fighting the Latins of his time with their own weapons has compelled Datev, in his *Book of Questions*, to borrow and appropriate for the Armenians doctrines advanced by the Latins which, though not owned by the Armenian Church, yet lie outside the matters in dispute. It would seem that Datev meant to show that the Armenian Church nowhere was short in its body of doctrines. Hence the Church's seven sacraments, and extreme unction, and the kinds and degrees of sins, and the explanation of the communion (*scil.*, transubstantiation), and the consanguineal degrees, and other matters of a similar order.

The printing of the *Book of Questions* was first undertaken by a nuncio of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, Peter of Astarabad (Persia), at Constantinople in 1721, who however got no further with the enterprise than a few "signatures" only before he went home to die. Other hands in 1729 undertook the task *de novo*, under the sponsorship of the then Patriarch of Constantinople, John Golod, who was an outstanding patron of learning. The work was concluded in the following year. In its printed form the book is a quarto volume, in coarse print, of over 800 pages of two columns each. Copies extant are rare, and no reprint has since been made.

⁴ See his *National History (Azcabadum)* (Constantinople, 1914), II, Column 2029.